**speak before God** (with a *consciousness* of  
His presence) in Christ (not ‘*in the name  
of Christ*, nor ‘*concerning Christ,’* nor  
“*according to Christ:*’ but as usual, **in  
Christ**; as united to Him, and members of  
His body, and employed in His work).

**CH. III. 1—VI.10.]** BEGINNING WITH  
A DISOWNING OF SELF-RECOMMENDATION,  
THE APOSTLE PROCEEDS TO SPEAK CONCERNING HIS APOSTOLIC OFFICE AND HIMSELF AS THE HOLDER OF IT, HIS FEELINGS, SUFFERINGS, AND HOPES, PARTLY  
WITH REGARD TO HIS CONNEXION WITH  
THE CORINTHIANS, BUT FOR THE MOST  
PART IN GENERAL TERMS.

**1—3.]**  
*He disclaims a spirit of self-recommendation.*

**1.] Are we beginning again?**  
alluding to a charge probably made against  
him of having done this in his former epistle; perhaps in its opening section, and  
in some passages of chs. v.ix., and in ch.  
xiv. 18; xv. 10 al.—See 2 Cor. x. 18.

**or need we** (literally, “*or, perhaps we  
need;”* which gives an ironical turn to the  
question), **as some** (so 1 Cor. iv. 18;  
xv. 12; Gal. i. 7, he speaks of the teachers  
who opposed him, as “*some*.” Probably  
these persons had come recommended to  
them, by *whom* does not appear, whether  
by churches or Apostles, but most likely by  
the former, and on their departure requested similar recommendations from the  
Corinthian church to others), **epistles of  
recommendation to you, or from you?**

**2.] Ye are our epistle** (of commendation) **written on our hearts** (not  
borne in our hands to be shewn, but engraven, in the consciousness of our work  
among you, on our hearts. There hardly  
can be any allusion, as Olshausen thinks, to the twelve jewels engraven with the  
names of the tribes and borne on the breastplate of the High Priest, Exod. xxviii. 21.  
The plural seems to be used, as so often in  
this Epistle,—see e. g. ch. vii. 3, 5,—of  
Paul himself only), **known and read by all  
men** (because all men are aware, what issue  
my work among you has had, and receive  
me the more favourably on account of it.  
But ‘*all men*’ includes the Corinthians  
themselves; his success among them was his  
letter of recommendation *to* them as well  
as to others *from* them):

**3.]** literally,  
**manifested to be** (that ye are) a**n epistle  
of Christ** (i.e. *written by Christ*,—not, a3  
Chrys., al., *concerning Christ*:—He is the  
Recommender of us, the Head of the  
church and sender of us His ministers)  
**which was ministered by us** (i.e. *carried  
about, served in the way of ministration*by us as its bearers,—not, as some explain  
it, *written by us as amanuense*s: see below), **having been inscribed, not with ink,  
but with the Spirit of the living God** (so  
the tables of the law were “*written with  
the finger of God*,” Exod. xxxi. 18); **not  
on stone tables** (as the old law, ib.), **but on**(your) **hearts**, (which are) **tables of flesh.**The apparent change in the figure in this  
verse requires explanation. The Corinthians are his Epistle of recommendation,  
both to themselves and others; *an Epistle,*  
*written* by Christ, *ministered* by St. Paul;  
*the Epistle itself* being now the subject,  
viz. the Corinthians, *themselves the writing  
of Christ*, inscribed, not on tables of stone,  
but on hearts, tables of flesh. The Epistle  
itself, written and worn on St. Paul’s heart,  
and there known and read by all men, consisted of the *Corinthian converts,* on whose